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1. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The LGBTQI+ community is expansive. This glossary includes detailed terms, and further expands on the intention of using the “+” in recognition and affirmation of the expansiveness of the community.  

- **Ableism:** Discrimination and prejudice against people with physical, intellectual and / or psychiatric disabilities
- **Asexual:** a person who is not sexually attracted to people regardless of sex, gender and / or gender expression
- **Bisexual:** people who attracted to individuals of the same and other genders
- **Cisgender:** a person whose gender identity, or gender expression is conventionally aligned with the sex assigned at birth
- **Cisnormative:** comments, behaviours and attitudes which assume being cisgender as “normal”
- **Femininity:** a set of behaviours, qualities and gender expression assumed to be “womanly” and are typically assumed only to be embodied by (cisgender) women
- **Gay:** men who are sexually attracted and romantically partner with men
- **Heteronormativity:** a social system which prioritises and normalises heterosexual relationships, romantic attractions
- **Intersectionality:** a phrase coined by Professor Crenshaw to demonstrate the various ways in which oppressive systems intersect towards people of multiple marginalised identities
- **Intersex:** umbrella term used for people whose biological variations do not fall within the conventional male and female categories
- **Lesbian:** usually, women who are sexually, romantically attracted and partner with other women. Non-binary people can also be lesbians
- **Masculinity:** a set of behaviours, qualities and gender expression which are assumed to be “manly” and are typically assumed only to be embodied by (cisgender) men
- **Misgendering:** referring to someone by a pronoun which they do not identify with
- **Misogynoir:** a phrase coined by Moya Bailey that describes the anti-Black racist misogyny experienced by Black women
- **Pansexual:** someone who is sexually and romantically attracted to people regardless of gender
- **Queer:** used as an umbrella term to recognise and encapsulate people who are within the LGBT community
- **Trans:** an inclusive term which, in addition to transgender, includes recognition for gender non-conforming and non-binary people
- **Transgender:** an acknowledgement that one’s gender differs from cultural and conventional expectations of the sex they were assigned at birth
- **Straight passing:** people who are assumed to be cisgender heterosexual based on their gender and gender expression

Retrieved: https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary (23 April 2020)
2. FOREWORD

Through the work of the Social Transformation Unit, the National Business Initiative (NBI) is invested in engaging the business sector to deepen understanding about the importance of inclusion. This is in so far as strategies designed to promote inclusion through behavioural change. Moreover, such organisational design would have to be underpinned by credible transformative policies and processes, which inform the work of the NBI Social Transformation Unit.

Across the globe, the inclusion and the representation of LGBTQI+ employees in the workplace remains an ongoing issue that must be addressed. An international study sampling 3,000 LGBTQI+ youth in 15 countries, including South Africa, conducted by Out Now is instructive about the challenges confronting this segment of the working population. In the survey, South African participants’ responses revealed that:

- A total of 47% hid their gender identity or sexual orientation out of fear this would affect their career progression;
- A total of 50% became apprehensive being open about their sexuality and gender identity after hearing negative remarks and opinions from colleagues;
- A total of 29% went back into the closet; and
- About 1 in 3 did not disclose their gender identity or sexual orientation to their direct managers at their first jobs.

The promotion of an inclusive environment for LGBTQI+ employees in the workplace is a human right, which correlates with good business returns. In 2017, Deloitte conducted a study showing 80% of respondents prioritised an inclusive work environment. A total of 72% of participants indicated they would leave an organisation which had a hostile posture towards and was exclusionary to LGBTQI+ communities.

Companies that adopt an inclusive stance experience better business performance and growth, according to numerous studies focusing on this area of research. These types of inclusive workplaces are able to do this because they attract, as well as retain, a diverse talent pool. This, in turn, broadens the businesses’ customer base. Furthermore, inclusive work environments document greater levels of employee productivity. What happens in these businesses is a microcosm of the potential benefits wider society can derive from embracing individuals who identify with the LGBTQI+ community. This is so because individuals from the LGBTQI+ community become an integral part of economic activity, contribute towards competitiveness and growth.

This study aims to spur a process by which the South African business sector will fundamentally transform work environments to be more inclusive of LGBTQI+ employees. Such change would have to filter through all tiers and levels, from junior staff, middle management and senior executives. Although the task of transforming is a monumental undertaking that has to be treated with due care and consideration, the benefits that lie at the end of the work are immense. In inclusive workspaces, employees have been shown to experience heightened job satisfaction, improved relationships with colleagues, better representation at higher levels, and better health and productivity outcomes.

3. BACKGROUND

Understanding the experiences of LGBTQI+ employees is a crucial aspect in the task of creating inclusive workplaces. As such, the NBI has conducted research not only to fill this knowledge gap, but also to aid in making inroads on what course to take to create inclusion. In addition, the research will supplement the existing body of knowledge about developments in South African workplaces. The study will also seek to give insight about company training, policies and procedures. This will all be done to further the work on inclusion, diversity and representation in the workplace.

Our interest is in adding to the evolution in thinking with reference to workplace engagements on transformation. By so doing, we want to expand the narrative when articulating exclusion and inequality. This forms part of the broader goal of enriching the work being carried out by the Social Transformation Unit.

To that end, this report is intended to elucidate the social nuances which unfold in the workplace and either inhibit or aid LGBTQI+ employees’ participation. In doing this, we want to equip the business sector to be more proactive when it comes to inclusion and representation.

Individuals who identify with LGBTQI+ communities experience discrimination and harassment in the workplace across the spectrum, according to a report on PRIDE at Work. Employees who are part of the LGBTQI+ communities often worry about how they are perceived. There are those in the LGBTQI+ community who are “straight passing” and assumed to be cisgender heterosexual, based on their gender expression and other behaviour. This places such individuals in the difficult position of constantly having to come out in their workplaces and professional platforms.

Through gaining a better understanding of employees’ experiences in the workplace, this report will serve as a point of departure for a call of accelerated action on issues pertaining to LGBTQI+ representation, protection, bias, discrimination and inclusion.

4. GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE

4.1. INCLUSION IN THE WORKPLACE ACROSS THE GLOBE

Historically, pivotal LGBTQI+ movements have inspired shifts in the workplace when it comes to diversity, inclusion and representation. International organisations and diversity units have taken important steps in changing workplace dynamics. The assumption that gender expression, gender identity and sexual orientation are irrelevant when considering the workplace as a space of productivity and career growth, is not only unfortunate – it is also untrue. The reality is that employees from the LGBTQ+ communities step into workplaces and often face the same challenges they experience in wider society such as exclusion and prejudice.

Over the years, LGBTQI+ rights have made important inroads. However, systemic exclusion, discrimination and bias remain factors across sectors and job levels.

Multinational companies have developed interventions to encourage inclusion and representation. These kinds of interventions often focus on:

- Policy reviews followed by changes. Companies are recorded to enact, update and review their policies over a period (usually 1-5 years). Such policies prohibit discrimination and bias;
- Holding training and sensitivity workshops for employees;
- Establishing affinity groups for LGBTQI+ employees, as a structure to further raise awareness. Some companies have groups for allies; and
- Benefits tailored towards recognising employees who are sensitive to gender identities and expression, inclusive language and parental structures.
In **Canada**, a study found inclusion is an extension of human rights. The Ontario Human Rights Commission notes that it is important for companies to detail anti-discrimination and anti-bias policy explicitly. This helps to set the standard for workplace behaviour and appropriate conduct. Furthermore, companies that have a dedicated unit or staff for inclusion and an LGBT Champion sourced from senior and executive levels foster a workplace culture focused on inclusivity.

In **New Zealand**, the Workplace Equality Index, based on an online survey conducted with 1,865 respondents, reflected important findings. These include a finding that a third of LGB employees are more productive when they are “out” at work. A total of 83% of LGB employees feel safe to be themselves when they are “out” in the workplace. A quarter of respondents believe being “out” has a positive impact on their career progression. Similar to the Canadian study, the results of the index show that LGB employees saw a correlation between positive messaging and allyship from C-Level executives.

In **Australia**, a survey done by PwC in 2017 sought to measure perceptions about the importance of employee authenticity in the workplace. In addition, the study looked at the impact of having an LGBT+ employee network and the experiences of LGBT+ workers across industries. Key findings reflect that a combination of organisational size, the presence of an LGBTQI+ network and the respective sector were reliable predictors of employee comfort levels to “come out” in the workplace. Employees were more likely to experience homophobia in the construction sector, for example, under an organisation that did not have an LGBTQI+ affinity group.

National legislation affecting the LGBTQI+ communities has a bearing on company policies and broadly sets the context for how those who identify with the LGBTQI+ communities experience the workplace through social encounters and behaviour.

In **India**, Section 377 of the India Penal Code was found unconstitutional in 2018. This is so because the section’s declaration to criminalise sexual activities “against the order of nature” arguably extended to the LGBTQI+ community. Despite this legal milestone, corporate India remains regressive. There is also no law in existence that explicitly protects and promotes the rights of the LGBTQI+ communities. The absence of this form of legal protection encourages employees to retreat into secrecy. There are, however, organisations in India which support the LGBTQI+ community and advocate for inclusion in the workplace.

There is a common finding, from New Zealand, the UK and Australia to India, that legislation is instrumental for and an enabler of inclusion. Policies are often an extension and practical articulation of legislation, as well as serve as an important protection mechanism for LGBTQI+ employees. Homophobia and exclusion are not restricted to overt discrimination at societal level, but also extend to intolerant workplaces.

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5. SOUTH AFRICAN BEST LEGAL PRACTICE

Through its progressive Constitution, South Africa was one of the first states in the world to prohibit unfair discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation. The country is an exception on the African continent, where anti-LGBTQI+ discrimination is often entrenched in law. South Africa’s stance has earned the country plaudits for breaking the mould and veering away from the draconian treatment of the LGBTQI+ community in law. Moreover, the country has other pieces of legislation that are not only designed to bolster LGBTQI+ rights, but are also aimed at enabling free expression. Some of the legal provisions include:

- Section 9 of the Constitution which states that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is illegal;

- The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 precludes employers from discriminating against employees based on sexual orientation;

- In 2006, the Union Bill was passed, paving the legal pathway for same-sex couples to marry; and

- The 1996 South African Schools Act was implemented to be ensure schools are more inclusive and take pupils’ sexual orientation into account.

Despite these legal protections, the LGBTQI+ community faces discrimination, harassment and violence. A report on the In-Country Meeting on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression found that violence perpetrated against individuals within these communities was a common occurrence. Meaningful enforcement and appropriate behavioural change in the social sphere remain elusive. This has undermined progress.¹⁰

Progressive Prudes ran a survey which showed that 51% of respondents believed gay individuals are entitled to equal rights, but 72% of participants thought same-sex activity was morally wrong.¹¹

Systemic barriers prevent LGBTQI+ employees from feeling safe, being represented and developing adequately at work. Social stigma and discrimination experienced through behaviour and social encounters are often cited. This is compounded by a lack of access to existing or up-to-date policies which address the protection of LGBTQI+ employees.¹²

In the labour market, such policies pertain to hiring practices, company discrimination policies, union policies and grievance mechanisms. These structures must function and reflect the realities faced by the LGBTQI+ communities.

5.1 EXPERIENCES OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

In the workplace, experiences of discrimination and exclusion are multifaceted and varied. These differing experiences are commonplace for those within the LGBTQI+ community. Some individuals might have privileges based on social markers including race, gender, sexuality, class and ability. Taking this into consideration, an attempt to delineate discrimination requires critical thinking about the ways specific groups are marginalised across social settings, including the workplace.

In South Africa, research exists that shows particular and specific discrimination, exclusion and violence experienced by Black lesbian and transgender individuals.¹³

By conducting this research, the NBI is interested in unpacking these nuanced experiences to gain a deeper understanding of how companies can respond in a manner which is alive and sensitive to these social complexities.


6. **RESEARCH METHOD**

For the purposes of this study: the NBI conducted desktop research on LGBTQI+ inclusivity in the workplace, held interviews and ran a survey to gain a better understanding of participants’ experiences. The interviews were based on semi-structured questions and took a narrative approach, wherein participants are quoted verbatim. The interviews have been analysed to unpack themes of experiences, and how these can be used to formulate inclusive strategies.

**Participants**

As stated in a previous section, South Africa is among a handful of countries on the continent which recognise and safeguard LGBTQI+ rights. But social stigma and systematic issues prevent those who belong to the community from interacting effectively in the workplace. This leaves them vulnerable to discrimination.

Participants were asked about, among other aspects, existing company policies, experiences in the workplace and overall organisational culture on LGBTQI+ matters. An invitation to participate was limited to individuals who identify with the LGBTQI+ community and work in corporate South Africa.

This study conducted in-depth interviews with 11 participants working in banking and finance, marketing, communications, extractive, engineering, technology and economic development industries. A total of 33 respondents participated in the online survey.
The 33 online survey respondents work in different sectors. The survey questions were designed to measure the extent of inclusion in the workplace, the level of safety and security at work, and encounters with colleagues based on gender, gender expression and sexuality. An overview of participants’ demographics is reflected as follows:

### Gender

- **Non-binary**: 49%
- **Cisgender woman**: 21%
- **Cisgender man**: 15%
- **Transgender woman**: 6%
- **PREFER TO SELF-DISCRIBE**: 6%

### Sector

- **Professional services (accounting, PR, consulting, advertising)**: 49%
- **Banking & Finance**: 15%
- **Other**: 21%
- **Technology**: 6%
- **Transportation**: 6%
- **Law**: 3%
7.1. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY SHOW:

- A total of 36% of respondents feel a sense of overall safety and security to be open about their sexuality in the workplace;
- A total of 41% work for companies which have clear, transparent policies that specifically outline anti-discrimination against the LGBTQI+ communities;
- A total of 24% have company leadership which reflects allyship and support for the LGBTQI+ communities;
- A total of 40% feel comfortable to speak openly about their partners; and
- A total of 70% reported no experience of being bullied in the workplace on the basis of their sexuality, gender and / or gender expression.

A general observation from the survey is an indication from respondents that visibility is a key aspect on how inclusion manifests in the workplace.

Inclusion in the workplace and, by extension, visibility require organisations to have a well publicised and supportive stance on the LGBTQI+ community. Organisations must also have leadership aligned to these values, as well as policies and structures designed specifically to recognise the community. Cultivating an understanding of how attitudes and stigma affect employees’ ability to participate meaningfully in the workplace is also important.
8. INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Interviews were conducted to gain insights about structural and behavioural encounters in the workplace. Through a narrative approach, participants were able to share their understanding of and ability to access company policies and supportive mechanisms. In addition, participants detailed anecdotal accounts of their interactions with colleagues and encounters with managers’ conduct. Participants did this to illustrate how such experiences informed the manner in which they conducted themselves in the workplace.

8.1.1. EXISTING AS A SPECTACLE IN THE WORKPLACE

Individuals who are regarded as “visibly Queer” are often those whose gender expression, behaviour and mannerisms deviate from “normal” ideas about how men and women are expected to present themselves. These individuals are often subjected to explicit and subtle misgendering in the workplace, as one participant noted:

“I don’t even like going out for meetings with clients anymore … they don’t even have to say anything. You just know from how they [are] looking at you that they are trying to figure out if you are a boy or girl. Everywhere I go, I know people are staring … not because I’m a new person that just walked into the room, it’s because they’re trying to figure me out. Honestly, I’m just there to work …”

The existence of gender in cisnormative and binary terms alienates and excludes LGBTQI+ identifying employees whose gender expressions do not conform with such expectations. The judgments and subtle questioning referred to above, speak to how individuals step into spaces which often draw unwarranted attention and causes discomfort as others try to place them in a specific gender or identity category. These assumptions are harmful as individuals experience misgendering, especially in instances where they use they/them pronouns, are agender or trans. In addition to feeling like a spectacle, employees are then placed in uncomfortable positions of having to correct colleagues constantly about their pronouns and are likely to encounter professional spaces where they will be misidentified, misgendered and dismissed professionally.
8.1.2. BEING OUT IS A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

Although companies declare support for the LGBTQI+ communities, participants noted being “out” at work required significant safety and strategic considerations. For one participant, working in the banking sector as a Black woman was difficult enough without the additional pressure of being Queer. Given the rigidity of that corporate environment, where cisgender men’s voices and contributions are prioritised, the safest route for the Black Queer woman was to rely on the discretion and privilege of being “straight passing” as a means of assimilating.

The majority of participants also reflected that being out at work had negative implications on access to opportunities and upward mobility in their organisations.

“I recently gave a presentation for the board where I emphasised the importance of including Queer-owned SMEs as part of our supply chain and my idea was shut down. This reaction made me very nervous because these are people who are going to be important for my career … I didn’t want to jeopardise the job offers they made me. I decided to keep quiet …”

The discriminatory views held by executives and managers force LGBTQI+ employees into additional emotional labour. The emotional labour is expanded on assessing which professional spaces are likely to be accommodating and how to engage the personal politics of those in power. In such contexts, bias and discrimination affect employees’ prospects of upward mobility and the extent to which their ideas are heard. One participant observed that when visibly Queer individuals were in managerial positions, they were often in the lowest-paid bracket. In addition, these individuals would have transformation and diversity portfolios incorporated into their work.
8.1.3 INTERSECTIONALITY AS A KEY FACTOR IN NAVIGATING THE WORKPLACE

“It’s stressful this thing, not only am I a butch but I’m also Black ...”

Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw conceptualised intersectionality as the various ways in which oppressive systems essentially intersect to marginalise particular groups of people. This happens through, among the few, racism, misogynoir, patriarchy, ableism and classism. The existence of these systems makes particular individuals vulnerable to discrimination, harassment and exclusion from different aspects of society.

In the workplace, participants reflected on the multiple difficulties they experienced from other social identifiers such as their race and gender, which compounded exclusion. As such, assimilation into corporate culture demands that individuals make concessions on the various forms of bias and antagonisms they endure in order to exist in the workplace. Often, the layers of self are additional barriers in accessing spaces and opportunities for growth and exposure.

Transformation – deepening it, entrenching it and speeding up its pace – remains at the fore of South African business. A powerful illustration of this is the prominent representation of cisgender heterosexual white men in executive leadership. The representation of Black executives is disproportionate to South Africa’s demographics – and there is not a known C-Level Black executive who identifies with the LGBTQI+ communities.

Our participants viewed the lack of representation and visibility as demonstrative that work environments were still grappling with racial and gender inclusion. However, there is minimal focus on meaningfully transforming to include the LGBTQI+ communities.

Understanding intersectionality means acknowledging that individuals experience silencing, erasure and bias based on their multiple identities at the same time. The layered experiences of participants point to the various social barriers they are expected to overcome in order to advance in the workplace.
8.1.4. SILENCE AS A FORM OF MISPLACED ALLYSHIP

During the study, participants were asked to reflect on specific encounters they have had with colleagues on the basis of their sexuality, gender and gender expression. Most noticed that their cisgender heterosexual colleagues found it easier to remain silent, instead of directly asking about how they identified or partnerships. An ally is someone who intentionally and deliberately acts with care and support towards another person or group, according to a Merriam Webster definition.

Individuals who possess significant privilege and social capital demonstrate allyship to the LGBTQI+ communities by speaking out against discrimination and bias. These individuals supplement such acts of support by holding others accountable for ignorance and upholding mechanisms that protect and promote LGBTQI+ rights.

However, silence is considered a misplaced form of allyship. Silence often comes from a place of fear of inadvertently causing harm, according to participants. But the choice to keep quiet means there is no space to engage about the complexity of the LGBTQI+ communities. This, in turn, often results in opportunities to show initiative to learn being lost. It is in this silence where the LGBTQI+ communities experience erasure in the workplace.

At a structural level, this silence is most uncomfortable and piercing during Pride Month. Nine of the 11 interview participants noted that their employers neither made internal nor public statements in support of the LGBTQI+ communities. Silence on matters and events recognising the LGBTQI+ communities reveals a lack of appreciation for diversity. Thus, ongoing company support and visibility are important means to demonstrate transformative leadership and allyship.

Allyship: is the practice of emphasizing social justice, inclusion, and human rights by members of an ingroup, to advance the interests of an oppressed or marginalized outgroup.
8.1.5 TOKENISATION IS NOT INCLUSION

When participants were intentionally open about their gender identity and sexuality, they noticed a trend whereby they would be tokenised by senior staff, who professed allyship to the LGBTQI+ communities:

“Once [the men] stopped seeing me as a fetish to fulfil their desires because I’m bisexual, the women would out me to different clients ... they would say my talents come from having to face so much adversity in my life. They make it sound as if I’m brilliant because I’m a Queer Black woman and not despite of it – and now everyone needs to know about what makes me special.”

Consequently, tokenising employees implies their work ethic and achievements are a result of their oppression. This diminishes their talent and expertise. Moreover, their marginalisation by virtue of their identities is weaponised as motivation to work harder as a key demographic in the room. This also means the choice to be openly Queer is taken away from them. The power imbalances that occur when they are outed to clients and stakeholders without their permission erodes their choice to be openly Queer. In the professional space, there is seldom a check-in to ascertain the relevance of mentioning their sexuality or gender identity. Instead, these social identifiers are used as bargaining tools to demonstrate difference and show the intentionality of companies to include “true” diversity.

Placing LGBTQI+ employees in managerial positions for diversity purposes means organisations are complicit of perpetuating exclusion and isolation. This practice further reveals workplaces which are not prepared for meaningful inclusion that extends beyond checklists and compliance. In these instances, employees are made to feel as though they are ambassadors for the communities they identify with. This burdens them with the disproportionate task of engaging in emotional labour to correct assumptions about a multidimensional population. Their identities are used to demonstrate company progression without unpacking why tokenising is also a form of power imbalance at work.
8.1.6. BELONGING AS A REFLECTION OF WORKPLACE CULTURE

Throughout the interviews, participants consistently reflected on their understanding and experience of belonging. In different ways, they continue to measure their contribution to the workplace based on interactions they have had with company structures and social relations. Some key reflections from participants found different reasons for wanting to belong:

“I remember my then manager at the time telling me I don’t belong there and that perhaps I should try an alternative career in the fashion industry … that corporate wasn’t for me … that flamboyantly gay men often thrive in fashion.”

“Only a select few colleagues know that I’m Queer. It’s really tiring having to tell everyone because I have to prepare for the inappropriate questions that other straight people don’t get asked. [So] you kind of try to build an anonymous community in the workplace. We are only Queer to each other and would rather leave management out of it.”

“Most of us at the office are Queer, so I immediately felt like I belonged, even during my interview. I don’t spend all day talking about being gay, but knowing I’m not the only one makes me feel less alone and safer.”

“I want my professional accolades to speak for me more than anything … I no longer care about belonging because my work is not about the emotion or community. It is about deliverables and performance. As long as I continue doing well, then I belong to the company as a valuable employee …”

Belonging is a multifaceted process. Participants revealed that the extent to which a business is inclusive was a determining factor in how they navigated and grew in the workplace.

Exclusion and marginalisation, no matter the degree and form, have negative implications on employee wellness, happiness, productivity, company retention and leadership development.

The components that make for an ideal workplace, according to participants, include:

- Preparation, there is a fundamental understanding of difference and appropriate policies are in place that pertain to grievance claims and support structures such as affinity groups;

- Recognition of the LGBTQI+ communities through affirmations that do not burden employees. Such forms of visibility should not be shouldered by those who are openly Queer. Rather, this should be seen as a company affirmation, which recognises the importance of embracing difference; and

- Representation in senior and executive positions can assist in cultivate a culture of belonging. However, there is an understanding there are systemic barriers which inhibit individuals from being open about their identities, especially in cases where they are not “visibly Queer”.

In the broader social sense, participants noted they are hyperaware of the attitudes and stigma associated with being part of the LGBTQI+ community. These biased views are also evident in the workplace. These attitudes and behaviour make employees feel unsafe and insecure about being open about their identities, fearing repercussions.
9. BUSINESS INTERVENTIONS AND CALL TO ACTION

An evolved sector response must take into account the views and attitudes held by its general population. The workplace is a microcosm of society. Often, the discrimination and the exclusion faced by LGBTQI+ employees in other social settings are also present in the workplace. The responsibility to create an inclusive future belongs to all segments and sectors of society, including business. Understanding the social and the structural barriers inhibiting growth and belonging for LGBTQI+ employees presents an opportunity for companies to drive a transformative agenda that prioritises an inclusive and expanded definition of diversity.

Some of the key interventions to be made:

- Anti-discrimination policies need to mention explicitly and include the LGBTQI+ communities. These structures need to be accessible and outline mechanisms which provide support in the case of discrimination and / or harassment;

- In cases where companies have international branches, there needs to be standardised policies which protect all employees who identify with these communities. This consistency has to be reflected in all leadership structures, communication and co-ordinated efforts towards ensuring LGBTQI+ employees are included;

- The unlearning of social stigma, discrimination and biases against LGBTQI+ employees are a business matter requiring investment in support structures. This also includes finding innovative ways to educate and sensitize staff about how their daily encounters, perceptions and views impact the community at large. There is value in the establishment of support groups, dialogues and platforms geared towards providing recognition and knowledge sharing on the varied experiences of LGBTQI+ employees at work;

- Protection against discrimination and bias should extend to contractors, freelancers, consultants and other occasional staff; and

- Leadership buy-in and support are key in transforming workplace cultures. When leaders show support, companies have the opportunity to be in better alignment with the ethos and the values articulated to foster an environment that is not only welcoming, but also nurtures the growth of diverse individuals within organisations’ ranks.

Transformed and inclusive workplaces are well placed and prepared to welcome new generations into the workforce. Gender identity and sexuality are paramount, specifically for Generation-Z employees, and this requires a business shift to the workforce. The workplace transformation is an imperative that cannot be ignored and will be a key determinant of a company’s ability to attract the best talent and skills pool.

The experiences of LGBTQI+ employees are layered and nuanced. They reflect the complicated nature of South African society. On one level, there is acceptance. But in the broader society, there is hostility and condemnation. This latter reality marginalises these communities even though they enjoy legal protection. In light of the above, companies have an opportunity to be proactive about implementing inclusive policies. Doing so will ensure companies keep in step with global standards which foreground LGBTQI+ inclusion as a human rights imperative.

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10. OUR TEAM

Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze, Head: Social Transformation

Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze leads the NBI's Social Transformation programme. McLaren-Ushewokunze's responsibilities include developing and implementing the NBI's programme to engage business in driving social transformation, with the aim of addressing inequality and inequity. The programme focuses on companies' internal transformation, and creating diverse and inclusive organisations. The programme encompasses businesses' relationship with society.

McLaren-Ushewokunze has over 12 years' experience in social and sustainable development. She has worked across sectors and in varying industries. Most of this time was spent in the corporate sector, where McLaren-Ushewokunze spearheaded the development and the implementation of sustainable development strategies. Prior to joining the NBI, McLaren-Ushewokunze spent six years at Discovery, where she supported the company's shared value business model. During that time, McLaren-Ushewokunze crafted innovative and award-winning annual reports.

Bridgette Mdangayi, Programme Manager: Social Transformation

Bridgette Mdangayi is the NBI's Programme Manager in the Social Transformation Unit. Mdangayi has 12 years of experience in cross-sectoral project and programme management, having worked in various segments. Mdangayi's expertise are in project formulation / development, resource mobilisation, capacity building, contract and grants management (pre- and post-award grant processes), social advocacy and development communications, strategic planning, and stakeholder management.

Mdangayi is an PMP® candidate at the Project Management Institute, where she is reading for a Strategic Leadership Certification at the Gordon Institute of Business Studies. Mdangayi holds a National Diploma (Tshwane University of Technology), a BA Degree in Communication Science (University of South Africa) and an Advanced Project Management Certification (Monash SA, now recognised as IIE MSA).

Khanyisa Nomoyi, Project Co-ordinator: Social Transformation

Khanyisa Nomoyi is the Social Transformation Project Co-ordinator at the NBI. Nomoyi holds an Honours' Degree in Political and International Studies from Rhodes University.

At the NBI, Nomoyi is responsible for content development, research, analysis, project co-ordination and stakeholder engagement on transformation. Nomoyi's current focus areas are: the gender pay gap; research on the experiences of LGBTQIAP+ employees in the workplace; economic inclusion; SMEs and supplier development; developing the intergenerational leadership; and gender-based violence pathways.

Previously, Nomoyi worked as a Research Co-ordinator in philanthropy under SGS Consulting. She has interned at the Centre for the Advancement of Community Advice Offices South Africa (CAOSA), MSF South Africa and SECTION27.

11. CONTACT US

Gugu McLaren-Ushewokunze
Head | Social Transformation
National Business Initiative
Tel: +27 11 544 6000
Email: GuguM@nbi.org.za

Bridgette Mdangayi
Programme Manager | Social Transformation
National Business Initiative
Tel: +27 11 544 6000
Email: BridgetteM@nbi.org.za

Khanyisa Nomoyi
Project Coordinator | Social Transformation
National Business Initiative
Tel: +27 11 544 6000
Email: KhanyisaN@nbi.org.za
12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all the research participants for sharing their experiences and insights. Your contributions towards enabling meaningful transformation for the South African private sector are invaluable. For that, we thank you.

Mention also goes to The Other Foundation, whose support made the research possible. As a unit, we look forward to further engagements and partnerships to extend our focus on inclusion in the workplace.

13. ANNEXURES A

13.1. ANNEXURE A: Interview Questions

1. How have you experienced the workplace in relation to your gender / sexual identity?
2. Are you aware of existing company policies and support structures should you face discrimination / harassment?
3. In the event of a discriminatory incident, how do you feel your company would address it and / or support you?
4. Do you feel that the company is inclusive when it comes to LGBTQIA+ matters?
4.1) How would you like for the company to be more responsive / inclusive?
5. Do you feel safe / secure to share your gender / sexual identity in the workplace?
6. Are there supportive initiatives in the company on LGBTQIA+ matters? Please detail.
7. Please share your experiences of interactions with colleagues while on international assignments.
8. Are you aware of the company’s public stance / values on LGBTQIA+ matters?
9. If yes, does leadership and management reflect these values?
10. Please share your experiences of interacting with colleagues on LGBTQIA+ matters or in relation to your sexual / gender identity
11. Are there any additional insights / experiences you would like to share?

13.2. ANNEXURE B: ONLINE SURVEY QUESTIONS

Part 1:

Demographic data:
- Name
- Age
- Race
- Gender (Drop down options: Man, Woman, Non-Binary, Prefer to Self-Describe, Prefer Not to Say)
- Nationality
- Company
- Position
- Duration in the company
- On the spectrum of sexuality, how would you best describe yourself?
- How do you think people perceive of you in relation to your gender identity and sexuality?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My colleagues and manager hold positive personal views on the LGBTQI+ communities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevant company policy has language and terminology that is LGBTQI+ sensitive and inclusive</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company’s anti-discrimination policies are applicable in their international branches</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company’s anti-discrimination policies are implemented in their international branches.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My colleagues engage with me positively despite my gender identity, gender expression and/or sexual orientation</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The company intentionally includes LGBTQI+ communities as part of their company values, organizational culture and ethos</td>
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<tr>
<td>The company is proactive in acknowledging LGBTQI+ events and commemorations (e.g. Pride Month).</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The company has LGBTQI+ affinity/support group(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is a clear policy on inclusion for LGBTQI+ communities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Company leadership reflects support and allyship towards LGBTQI+ communities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Part 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel secure and supported in the workplace to be open about my gender / sexuality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel overall comfort in my experience in the workplace</td>
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<td>I can speak openly and comfortably about my partner(s) in the workplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>I feel protected by the workplace anti-discrimination policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would describe my workplace as open and inclusive.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Part 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Almost everyday</th>
<th>At least once a week</th>
<th>Few times a month</th>
<th>Few times a year</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My colleagues / peers treat me with less courtesy because of my gender identity / sexuality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My manager(s) / boss(es) treat me with less courtesy because of my gender identity / sexuality</td>
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<tr>
<td>I experience disrespect and harassment because of my gender / sexual orientation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am bullied because of my gender identity / sexual orientation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My colleagues / managers express negative views towards LGBTQI/A+ communities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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